

Message Text

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65

ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 USIA-15 DIWY-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /038 W

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P 271750Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9098

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 1076

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC ST (ROCK, MRS Y. HERALDINE)

SUBJ: NOMINATION OF MRS. Y. HERALDINE ROCK FOR CU/IVP GRANT

REF: (A) STATE 090985; (B) BTN 1026; (C) BTN 0621

1. NAME: ROCK, MRS. Y. HERALDINE NEE GAHANDAJAR

2. SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

PRESENT: MRS. ROCK IS CURRENTLY ST. LUCIA'S MINISTER OF HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH, SPORTS, AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS AS WELL. AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE ST. LUCIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SINCE 1974, SHE IS ALSO ACTIVE IN THE ST. LUCIA FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF WHICH SHE IS SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT.

PAST: THE DYNAMIC AND INTELLIGENT MRS. ROCK SERVED AS A TEACHER, THEN AS THE ST. LUCIA GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER BEFORE LEAVING THE CIVIL SERVICE TO BECOME PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER, THEN SECRETARY OF THE POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT ST. LUCIA BANANA GROWERS ASSOCIATION. SHE ENTERED POLITICS WHILE IN THE LATTER POSITION. FOR SEVERAL YEARS, UNTIL 1974, SHE WAS AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE CASTRIES MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

3. PERSONAL DATA: BORN IN ST. LUCIA AROUND 1935, MRS. ROCK IS OF 100 PERCENT EAST INDIAN DESCENT BUT HAS BEEN FULLY ASSIMILATED INTO THE OVERWHELMINGLY PREDOMINANT BLACK SOCIETY OF ST. LUCIA.

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MARRIED, SHE HAS NO CHILDREN OF HER OWN BUT AS SHE TOLD AN

EMBASSY OFFICER, "LOTS OF ADOPTED CHILDREN."

4. TRAVEL ABROAD: TO THE BEST OF THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, MRS. ROCK HAS ONLY TRAVELED TO THE UNITED STATES. ABOUT 8 YEARS AGO, SHE SPENT ABOUT ONE MONTH IN THE NEW YORK AREA DOING TRAINING IN SOCIAL WORK WITH VISTA. MORE RECENTLY, MRS. ROCK HEADED THE ST. LUCIA DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE IN MEXICO.

5. PREVIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT GRANT: THE NOMINEE HAS NEVER PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED AN IVP GRANT FROM THE USG.

6. ESCORT SERVICES: ESCORT SERVICE SHOULD BE PROVIDED BUT AN INTERPRETER IS NOT NEEDED.

7. TENTATIVE VISA ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION: NOMINEE APPEARS ELIGIBLE FOR A J-1 VISA.

8. REASON FOR NOMINATION: AS THE CANDIDATE OF THE RULING UNITED WORKERS PARTY WHO DEFEATED RADICAL GEORGE ODLUM, A LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ST. LUCIA LABOUR PARTY, MRS. ROCK EARNED A REPUTATION AS A SKILLFUL AND INDEPENDENT-MINDED POLITICIAN. WITH POSSIBLY MANY YEARS AHEAD OF HER IN POLITICS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MINISTER ROCK COULD BECOME THE FIRST WOMAN PREMIER OR PRIME MINISTER IN THE CARIBBEAN. CERTAINLY AS THE HOLDER OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MINISTRIES IN THE GOSL, IN VIEW OF THE LARGE PROPORTION OF YOUTH IN ST. LUCIA'S POPULATION, MRS. ROCK IS WORTHY OF CULTIVATING. IF SHE RECEIVED AN IVP GRANT, THE ADDED EXPOSURE TO AMERICAN SOCIETY, INSTITUTIONS, CULTURE, AND COLLEAGUES WOULD BE OF IMMENSURABLE BENEFIT TO HER PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. ALSO OF THE NINE OR SO WOMEN ELECTED MEMBERS OF THEIR NEGATIVE PARLIAMENTS AND THREE WOMEN MINISTERS IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN REGION, THE EMBASSY FEELS THAT IT COULD NOT CHOOSE A MORE FITTING OR QUALIFIED PERSON THAN MRS. ROCK FOR A GRANT IN IWY.

9. POST OBJECTIVE OF US VISIT: AS INDICATED IN REFTTEL (B), THE EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A WOMAN GRANTEE IN THIS IWY. HOWEVER, EVEN IF IT WERE NOT IWY, MRS. ROCK WOULD STILL BE ONE OF THE EMBASSY'S NOMINEES, SINCE HER NOMINATION WOULD DEMONSTRATE CONCRETE USG INTEREST IN THE GOSL AND ST. LUCIA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC

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DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS IN PROGRESS BY WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE. MRS. ROCK'S NOMINATION WOULD SERVE TO KEEP OPEN THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE GOSL AND WOULD ALSO FURTHER CULTURAL CO-OPERATION WITH ST. LUCIA. SINCE ST. LUCIA MAY BECOME INDEPENDENT AS EARLY AS 1977, AN IVP GRANT TO MRS. ROCK WOULD GIVE THE USG AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO MOLD FAVORABLY THE OPINION OF ONE OF ST. LUCIA'S MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURES TOWARDS THE US.

10. POST ESTIMATE OF NOMINEE'S AVAILABILITY DATES FOR US PROGRAM:

WE BELIEVE NOMINEE WOULD BE PREPARED TO VISIT US IN EARLY FALL
BUT UPON NOTIFICATION BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT THIS NOMINATION HAS
BEEN APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE, WE WILL ASCERTAIN HER AVAILABILITY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BRIDGE01076
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750224-0346
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975067/aaaaafoj.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 090985, 75 BTN 1026, 75 BTN 0621
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 OCT 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <20 JAN 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NOMINATION OF MRS. Y. HERALDINE ROCK FOR CU/IVP GRANT
TAGS: OEXC, ST, (ROCK, Y HERALDINE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006